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ABSTRACT

This working paper is a product of a regional study in industrial South Wales of the determinants of participation and non-participation in post-compulsory education and training, with special reference to processes of change in the patterns of these determinants over time and to variations between geographical areas. The study combines contextual analysis of secondary data about education and training providers with a regional study of several generations of families in South Wales via survey, semi-structured interviews, and taped oral histories. This paper describes the provision of formal education and training in Wales during the period covered by the study, 1996-97, focusing where possible on these three research sites--Blaenau Gwent, Bridgend, and Neath Port Talbot. Specific topics are schools in Wales; the growth of initial education; bilingualism and territoriality; performance measures for initial education; pre-war adult education and training; whether a post-war learning society has existed; and performance measures for adult education. Appendixes include figures that detail educational participation and outcomes, further and higher education students in Wales, and destination of school leavers. Contains 73 references. (YLB)

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PATTERNS OF PARTICIPATION IN ADULT EDUCATION AND TRAINING

A Cardiff and Bristol University ESRC- funded Learning Society Project

WORKING PAPER 4

A Brief History of Education and Training in Wales 1900-1996

Stephen Gorard

1997

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Cardiff University of Wales

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LIST OF CONTENTS PAGE NUMBER

Introduction	1
1. Schools in Wales	1
2. The growth of initial education	3
3. Bilingualism and territoriality	6
4. Performance measures for initial education	8
5. Pre-war adult education and training	11
6. A post-war learning society?	15
7. Performance measures for adult education	19
Conclusion	23
Acknowledgements	24
References	24
Appendices	29

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A BRIEF HISTORY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN WALES 1900-1996

Stephen Gorard

with Gareth Rees Ralph Fevre and John Furlong

INTRODUCTION

The project, funded by the ESRC as part of the Learning Society Programme, is a regional study in industrial South Wales of the determinants of participation and non-participation in post-compulsory education and training, with special reference to processes of change in the patterns of these determinants over time and to variations between geographical areas. The study combines contextual analysis of secondary data about education and training providers with a regional study of several generations of families in South Wales via survey, semi-structured interviews and taped oral histories. The background to the study is further described in Gorard et al. (1996) while the methodology is outlined in Gorard et al. (1997). The study took place in three markedly different centres in industrial South Wales during 1996 and 1997. This paper describes the provision of formal education and training in Wales during the period covered by the study, focusing where possible on the three research sites - Blaenau Gwent, Bridgend and Neath Port Talbot.

1. SCHOOLS IN WALES

The educational experiences of different sections of society and different parts of Britain are in marked contrast and this is one reason for a focused regional study of education and training (the importance of place and time are argued further in

Gorard 1997). Although many official documents and much educational research refers to England and Wales as one entity, distinguishable only from Scotland or Northern Ireland, Wales, in fact, has a different educational system from England in several ways. Initial education in Wales is administered day-to-day by the Welsh Office, not the Department for Education and Employment. The majority of public examinations are taken using papers from the Welsh Joint Education Committee. There are several differences between the National Curriculum for Wales, and that for England, with subjects such as History, Geography, Art and Music having separate orders. The differences are in perspective as well as content, since, according to legislation, all pupils in Wales have the right to learn about Welsh language, culture and history (Jones and Lewis 1995). There is, or should be, a "*general Welshness pervading pupil's learning experiences*" (Jones and Lewis 1995 p. 24). The National Curriculum for Wales also specifies that Welsh language teaching is compulsory in all state-funded schools (Welsh Office 1995_a). All pupils, of whatever background, study Welsh from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 3, in addition to a modern foreign language in Key Stage 3. Welsh at Key Stage 4 is also compulsory in all Welsh-medium schools, and by 1999 will be compulsory in all secondary schools.

The uniformity of schools in Wales is remarkable. Among the 2,048 schools of all types in Wales in 1994, there were no City Technology Colleges, or similarly specialist schools for drama, sport, or languages (Welsh Office 1995_b). There were only 15 Grant Maintained (GM) schools altogether. There were no secondary GM schools by 1991, and no primary GM schools by 1993, and even in 1996, four of the eight Welsh counties contained no GM schools at all. In fact, fewer than 1% of schools in Wales have opted out, compared to more than 4% in England (Fitz *et al.* 1995). Of the 484,322 full-time pupil equivalents in Wales in 1994, 57% were in LEA primary schools, and 38% were in LEA secondary schools. Thus, only 5% of the school population were in GM, independent, and special schools combined (Welsh Office 1995_b). Parents in Wales do not have a realistic option of using local fee-paying schools, since there are so few such schools, including none in Mid-Wales, and only eight which until now have been able to offer Assisted Places (Gorard 1996). This may be partly a result of a stronger identification with the state education system in Wales (Lowe 1970). In selecting a school, families, particularly those from rural areas, may therefore face a choice from limited options of little diversity. Reynolds (1990) claimed

that 40% of parents in Wales had no choice of secondary school, unless they were prepared to travel 40 or more miles. Although this figure is probably an exaggeration the point about regional differences in the operation of school markets is a valid one.

These differences in policy, provision and ethos suggest that initial education in Wales is significantly different to elsewhere in the UK. South Wales is also particular in the evidence of a clear link between adult education and changes in the nature of local employment (Lewis 1993) and this is explored in the second part of this paper.

2. THE GROWTH OF INITIAL EDUCATION

Education in Wales provides something of a paradox, a history and reputation of respect for learning combined with relatively poor measures of educational attainment in the present day in almost every assessment. Education has often been treated as a "given" by writers in Wales and desire and respect for it as almost "primordial" (Roberts 1983). There has been a tendency in the past to refer to Wales as being a nation of education-lovers, as though there was some endemic ability in the make-up of its inhabitants (as the population of a geographical area, a racial grouping or a linguistic network perhaps). It has been stated, for example, that the "Welsh" value education, and have a deep-rooted desire for learning (Lowe 1970). By 1969 however, some observers were suggesting that these attitudes to learning were changing (Lowe 1970). Nowadays it is more commonly suggested that secondary schooling is almost a complete irrelevance to "ordinary", that is the majority of working-class, children in South Wales today (Browne 1987). There are thus, two distinct histories of the development of initial education in Wales and two versions of the current standard of education in the region. On the one hand, the people of Wales are seen as having a unique respect for learning leading to early innovation in the delivery of quality education to a relatively large proportion of the population, and on the other, education has been seen as elitist, constraining and of little relevance to most people. The British two track distribution of educational experience is perhaps at its most exaggerated in Wales.

There is a long history of non-conformity in Wales and schools based on ironworks, collieries, tinplate works and Sunday schools (Evans 1971). This

situation was first altered by the appearance of itinerant schools. By 1815 there were four private schools in the Merthyr Tydfil area, for example, rising to 45 by 1845 (Fletcher 1981). These were mostly "dame schools" tutoring small numbers in the teacher's own home. All were elementary and very cheap, charging the "school pence". There were a few more expensive superior private schools. Merthyr's first secondary school appeared in 1882. It was coeducational, taking 300 pupils of both sexes for a fee of 9d per week. Later, the Board of Education offered 20 scholarships to add to the nine existing privately-funded ones, in an attempt to encourage attendance at school by children from working-class backgrounds. The dame schools also flourished in Cardiff which was one of the fastest growing cities in Britain from 1875 to 1900 (Allsobrook 1990). Many private houses in Park Place, where the university now is, for example, were one-teacher all-age private schools.

In theory there was universal free elementary education available in Wales before 1889, although any higher standard of education, such as that required to enter a university, in practice required students to attend fee-paying schools. In that sense, all nineteenth century secondary schools were private. However, none of these were considered to be Public Schools in the English tradition. In fact, according to one writer "*the elite among the Welsh landowning gentry had sent their sons to the great English public schools since the sixteenth century and would not have contemplated such provision in Wales. The thought of a Welsh Eton was an absurdity*" (Jones 1990_a p. 62). The middle and lower-middle classes were not sufficient in numbers to support many of the foundation schools, which were "*few, relatively poor, compared with their English counterparts and far removed from the main centres of population in the nineteenth century*" (Jones 1990_a p. 63). The Welsh Intermediate Education Act of 1889 established the secondary age intermediate schools which, although state supported, did charge fees and offered scholarships to the poor. By 1911 for example, the Intermediate and Technical School in Merthyr charged £3 per year, but had 53% of pupils on free places (Fletcher 1981). Since there were insufficient wealthy middle-class families to support the selective intermediate schools in Wales, many reverted to being elementary schools, but some became boarding schools taking pupils from elsewhere, which was the origin of some of the present private schools.

Despite the claim of the 1967 Gittins report on primary education which stated that "*the Welsh have traditionally regarded themselves as having an unusually high respect for education.... The wide interest in education, which undoubtedly exists in Wales, can be seen not only as an outgrowth of its cultural tradition but as a consequence of its economic poverty*" (Istance and Rees 1994 p. 11), complete indifference to the day and works schools provided by benevolent employers continued in South Wales until at least 1920 according to HMI (Evans 1971). Schools were irregularly attended, and the common early withdrawal can only partly be explained by poverty and the need for children to be sent out to earn a living, especially since opportunities for children were less frequent in the local heavy industries than in the more common textile industries in England (Evans 1971). Even so, as late as 1928 infant boys were still employed to go down the mines, for example in Caerau Colliery, Maesteg (Keen 1979). Irregular attendance at school may have been condoned by parents who felt that there was no point in learning beyond ones sphere in life, and this attitude to schooling continued in South Wales until fairly recently. "*The main reason was the lack of appreciation of [its] importance for the future welfare of their children*" (Evans 1971 p. 262).

Traditionally there have not been sufficient jobs in Wales of a kind suitable for well-qualified school leavers and this has had two implications. Firstly, a high proportion of the best educated locals move elsewhere in the search for jobs, and secondly parents wishing to keep their family together and obtain their children's help in the family farm or business may not have provided any stimulus for further study. In periods such as the inter-war years when Wales was depopulated, it was nearly always the most able pupils who left the region (Webster 1990). For example, of 24 scholars in one village school in Cardiganshire from 1933-44, none lived in the area by 1950. Intermediate education did not lead to a suitable local job in a primarily agricultural area. Suitable jobs were often available in England, and that is where many young people went. As another example, of 60 leavers from Penygroes county school, Caernarfonshire in 1938, 26 went to England because they could not find a suitable local job (Evans 1990_a). In industrial areas, the exodus was greater, and the majority of school leavers left their home communities. This was unpopular in some families, and so education was seen by them as an evil, as with some Amish families in the USA (cf. Coleman 1990). An Alderman of Cardiganshire is

quoted as saying at this time *"if you want to keep your children in the country, don't give them any education at all"* (Jones 1982 p. 197). Early leaving has long been rife in Welsh rural schools since young people were required to work on the farms (Webster 1990), and this culture, stemming from the countryside, continues in some areas despite urban industrialisation (Allsobrook 1990).

After the 1944 Education Act, many intermediates became Grammar schools and no longer charged fees. In principle, selection was by merit but the population density was so low in parts of Wales that it proved impossible to implement a viable tri-partite system. There were no properly equipped specialist technical schools in South Wales at all (Evans 1990_a). Some pupils had to travel great distances to get to their selected school. For example, Whitland Grammar took pupils who were bussed from Camarthen fifteen miles away in the 1950s, and some children had to travel 50 or more miles. From 1951 to 1955 the selection rate for the grammar school in Narberth was over 40% (compared to a more common rate of 10% in England). Jones (1982) gave similar figures for the 1950s in Wales, where 36 to 50% of pupils attended grammar schools compared to 18 to 25% in England. In many cases this was not because of a greater ability or a differing educational philosophy, but often because there was no secondary modern school near enough. Some schools like St David's School, Pembrokeshire became bilateral grammar and secondary moderns, in which the pupils were streamed. Around Merthyr Tydfil, a lack of suitable sites made it difficult to have both grammar and non-grammar schools near each other, thus limiting the chances of most families (Fletcher 1981). After 1964 most schools had become large comprehensives, although sometimes on separate sites (Jones 1990_a).

3. BILINGUALISM AND TERRITORIALITY

One growing challenge for the education system in Wales has been the issue of bilingualism (WJEC 1994). The current legislation concerning Welsh language teaching faces several problems. The impact of the recent scale of population change revealed by the censuses (Gorard 1997) can be seen in the report of the Aberystwyth Policy Group (1990) that one rural school with a roll of 800 took on 66 pupils new to the area in one academic year. The impact of these population changes can also be seen in the decline of the Welsh language. In South Wales it has been claimed that less than 17% of inhabitants spoke any Welsh, even in 1901 before the biggest phase of development of the coalfield (Lewis 1993).

By 1971, only 21% of the people in the whole of Wales reported themselves as being able to speak any Welsh (Webster 1990), and that had dropped to 18.7% by 1991 (OPCS 1994), while among the younger age groups this figure was even lower (indications are that while the number of young people learning Welsh is rising, the number actually speaking it outside lessons is falling). In primary schools by 1990 there were 15,833 speakers of Welsh as a second language, and 14,830 speakers of Welsh as a first language, representing, in total, only 11% of the primary school population (Baker 1990). The number of children actually speaking Welsh at home has fallen every year since 1986, to a low of 6.5% (Welsh Office 1995_a), with only 5.4% of the 1994 GCSEs entered via Welsh. In many cases these children are from middle-class bilingual families living in predominantly English-speaking areas (Gorard 1997_b).

Interestingly, the one type of state-funded school peculiar to Wales - the Ysgol Cymraeg or Welsh-medium school - has grown in numbers in almost inverse proportion to the number of Welsh speakers (Baker 1990). Teaching through the medium of Welsh takes place in 34% of primary schools, and 18% of classes of all ages are now taught in Welsh (Welsh Office 1995_a). There are 506 Ysgolion Cymraeg, teaching 79,977 pupils and comparison of these figures with those above suggests that although many of these schools are in Gwynedd and Dyfed, where Welsh-speakers may be in a majority, over 60% of pupils attending such schools did not speak Welsh before attending school, and do not speak it at home. In some cases there are not enough teachers capable of teaching in Welsh to staff the necessary departments and this has led to problems for recruitment and occasionally to incompetent appointments, especially for Mathematics and Physics (Aberystwyth Policy Group 1990). Also, as a result of offering only a Welsh-medium education in Gwynedd, some classes have pupils who can only speak Welsh and some who can only speak English, which means that whatever the legislated nature of the school, classroom interaction goes on in both languages at the same time (Aberystwyth Policy Group 1990). Despite these problems, Welsh-medium schools in South Wales boast better than average raw-score outcome measures in many respects (Jones 1996), perhaps because of an elevated occupational class profile among their users (Packer and Campbell 1993).

Further, in schools teaching through the medium of English, the Welsh language is taught in addition to all of the subjects that appear in the National Curriculum

for England, which means that local pupils appear to have to work harder, just to reach the same attainment targets as in England at all Key Stages (although Technology at Key Stage 4 has now been dropped in Wales). This policy is implemented despite the fact that some pupils speak neither Welsh nor English as home, perhaps since their absolute number is small (Gorard 1997$_b$). This language policy in all schools, and throughout the age range, was originally to have been introduced sooner (Welsh Office 1990), but as with the Welsh-medium schools, lack of resources and sufficient trained teachers, among other factors, held up its implementation. For such practical reasons as lack of learning materials and shortage of Welsh-medium assessors (WJEC 1994), 3.2% of schools still do not teach any Welsh, while the proportion teaching Welsh as a first language has dropped dramatically since 1986, with 63% of schools now only teaching Welsh as a second language (Welsh Office 1995$_a$).

4. PERFORMANCE MEASURES FOR INITIAL EDUCATION

While the rest of the country has implemented equal opportunities policies that have allowed the number of women in authority in schools to rise, the proportion of female headteachers in Wales has actually fallen since 1985, and part of the blame for this has been attributed to poor staff policies (Reynolds 1990). Welsh schools tend to be very traditional, with more assemblies and until quite recently, higher levels of physical punishment. Also, although their resources may be similar to those in England, there are lower levels of chalkface spending, with a larger part of expenditure going on salaries and buildings (Reynolds 1990). Many of the primary schools are so small that there is also considerable difficulty in staffing the specialist requirements of the National Curriculum, and this situation can be exacerbated by the problems of teaching in Welsh, as already discussed.

Given these problems of remoteness, relative economic poverty and the implementation of a bilingual programme across the whole of a predominantly monolingual region, it is perhaps not surprising that many observers have been less than impressed by the levels of attainment in schools in Wales. The grammar school tradition, after 1944, polarised high attainment and high failure rates, wasting talent and encouraging social division (Istance and Rees 1995). Until the advent of comprehensivisation in the 1970s, schools in Wales had produced a high proportion of relatively well-qualified school leavers as well as a high proportion that were completely unqualified (Delamont and Rees 1996). This model has now

altered with only the high failure rate retained. As early as 1974 some reports suggested that schools, or pupils, in Wales were under-performing to some extent. A national survey of non-attendance at school found the situation in Wales much worse than in England, even in areas with similar socio-economic disadvantages (Reynolds 1995) but particularly in urban areas like Merthyr Tydfil and Cardiff in the 1980s (Reynolds 1990). The 1981 Loosmore report found that Welsh schools seemed overly concerned with the most able children, and that consequently too many of the others were leaving school with no qualifications at all. In 1977/78, 28% of pupils left school in Wales without any qualification (Jones 1990$_b$). This "failure" rate has always been higher than in England. Even by 1989, when only 9.5% of children in England left school with no qualifications, and this figure was decreasing every year, the figure for Wales was 17%, twice the size (Reynolds 1995). The introduction of league tables of GCSE examination results since 1993 have shown a similar picture. Even though the levels of social deprivation in some English regions are now similar to those of Wales, Welsh schools are still producing significantly worse results (TES 1993, 1994, 1995). The proportion of children leaving schools with no qualifications is higher in Wales than in England and rising, while the proportion of children with 5+ GCSEs at grades A-C is lower (TES 1995). As a further indication that local prosperity plays little part in outcomes, South Glamorgan, including Cardiff has the second highest rate of pupils leaving with no qualifications in Wales (18.6%), while it is an area of relative affluence, according to Reynolds (1990). One possible reason for this high "failure" rate in Wales which has been suggested is that the examinations taken are of a higher standard, so that the WJEC papers are not comparable to those of the English examination groups. However, Reynolds (1990) also found that Welsh secondary pupils performed worse than their peers in England on standardised tests given by the Assessment and Performance Unit. Additionally, according to Her Majesty's Inspectorate the relative lack of achievement in Welsh schools was not only manifested in examination results, but also in the quality of day to day lessons (OHCMI 1993). The same report concluded that "*in Wales overall... much under-achievement remains*" (OHCMI 1993 p.2) and Reynolds (1990) decided that Welsh children are, in some respects, "*schooled to fail*".

In fact, the picture may not be quite this bleak. An unpublished study carried out by the WJEC compared the GCSE results from each of the Welsh LEAs with

three LEAs in England with similar socio-economic profiles. This provided no evidence that Welsh schools were underperforming (Heycock, personal communication with author). Participation rates in education for the 14 to 21 year olds in Wales are average in terms of the UK as a whole, and the overall level of education in the population aged 25 to 59 is a little below average (Eurostat 1995). More people leave education empty-handed in Wales than in the rest of the UK, and fewer gain the qualifications, 2+ A levels, that will allow them direct continuation to academic Higher Education (Istance and Rees 1994). In some regions of Wales, such as the coastal regions, the benchmark figures of pupils have improved from 1992 to 1995 (see Figure 1), but in others, particularly the rural areas, there is increasing polarisation between the top and bottom achievers (Hackett 1995), and it is this polarisation that could partly explain the high level of "failure" in South Glamorgan mentioned above. In fact, 36% of 16 year olds gain no GCSEs grades A to C, while only 46% gain a C or better in English, 40% in Mathematics and 39% in Science (Welsh Office 1995c). In terms of qualifications for the most qualified school leavers, the situation is improving in Wales, with 37% of the workforce now having 2 A levels or equivalent (Welsh Office 1995c). However, this improvement is no better than in the rest of the UK, starts from a lower base figure and is tainted by the suggestion that the qualifications themselves may be decreasing in terms of value-in-exchange and by the very high "failure" rate. There has also been a rise in staying on rates at 16 from 55% of the age cohort in 1990 to 69% in 1993 - a figure higher than in England - but this average figure disguises much lower figures in some industrial areas (Istance and Rees 1995).

According to the Welsh Office (1995c), school leavers need to be literate, numerate, competent in the use of IT and confident in their ability to learn in the future. Links are to be encouraged between schools, colleges and places of work since these are important for careers education, an enrichment view of the world of work and necessary support for the teaching of vocational subjects. However despite the higher staying on rate today, more students from Wales are leaving school with no qualifications than in the rest of the UK which means that there is an important role for the adult education and training sector in compensating for this where necessary, perhaps in the form of lifelong learning (see Gorard et al. 1997b).

5. PRE-WAR ADULT EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Although there is always a danger of romanticising the past, there are accounts of a long-standing tradition in Wales of support for adult training and education (Istance and Rees 1994). This tradition of respect for education in Wales may stem from a culture based upon non-conformity and economic poverty (Gittins Report 1967). Before the era of compulsory universal education there was a history of Sunday schools, voluntary societies and schools based on ironworks, collieries, and tinplate works paid for by benevolent employers (Evans 1971), philanthropists and the workers themselves (Nash et al. 1995). The first organised form of adult education may have been the Sunday Schools and Church Literacy Societies (Welsh Department 1937) and this tradition of teaching adults in Sunday Schools may have been a distinctively Welsh phenomenon (Ellis 1935). Added to these were the Eisteddfodau, the workers society lectures, the Drama movement, festivals, choirs and traditional societies which were especially prevalent in Wales (Lowe 1970), the YMCA, League of Nations Union, Independent Labour Party, Co-operative societies, university classes, the Communist Party and informal learning in the pit, workshop, public house and barbers shops (Lewis 1993) so that "*together they have helped to produce that interest in religion, philosophy, letters and music which is characteristic of the Welsh people*" (Welsh Department 1937 p.7). This led some observers to detect a deeply-rooted desire for continuous learning in Wales, so that "*public participation in various forms of education is very much greater and the habit of community co-operation is very much stronger than in England*" (Lowe 1970 p. 315). The two roots of adult learning in South Wales were religion and the workplace. The first led to Sunday Schools, concerts and penny readings in the late nineteenth century organised by the local Chapel, and YMCA classes (Jones 1991) whose traditions of discussion and close textual analysis became one model for what followed. The second led to the WEA, Trade Union activities, workers societies and Institutes, the Plebs League, and the Labour College Movement. What was especially significant about these developments was that they were largely organised at the local level with a very close relationship between the providers, backers, and users. There is therefore a tradition in Wales of education for cultural reasons as well as for personal and social mobility which is in marked contrast to the current emphasis on learning for economic reasons (Rees 1996).

As in Scotland and North East England, the workers institutes may have been formed partly to combat drunkenness and intemperance among the workforce, and to start with were little used (Nash et al. 1995). In the early nineteenth century many of the institutes lacked educational facilities, except for those in the older iron and tinplate communities such as Tredegar and Gorseinon (Nash et al. 1995). But, as a growing proportion of the workforce was able to read after the 1870s and the Sunday schools, as well as helping to teach literacy, extended their own libraries to include secular books, the use of libraries grew. The first public library in Neath opened in 1834, and was followed nine years later by the Mechanics Institute, whose early teaching staff included Alfred Wallace and which undertook local adult classes (Eaton 1987).

The Workers Educational Association (WEA) was formed in Wales in 1903 as a federation of working class societies and educational groups with links to the Trade Unions (Welsh Department 1937), perhaps as an attempt to curtail the independence of workers education movements (Lewis 1993). An autonomous WEA district for South Wales followed in 1907, but like many of the workers they sought to educate there was nothing particularly Welsh about its founders, who were anglicised and not seen as inheritors of the traditional bardic/eistedfodd culture. Nor was the organisation seen as politically active enough at that time, since as one observer commented in 1900 "*education ... is to social reform what fuel is to the locomotive*" (Lewis 1993 p. 48). Accordingly there was no mass membership of the branches before the Great War - attendance at classes mostly teaching economics and industrial history rose from 204 people in South Wales 1912 to 505 in 1914 - and the organisation came to be dominated by the universities (except Cardiff which refused to take part). The first session in 1907 was a course run by a Professor of Greek and an ambulance class (Ellis 1935). In Wales there was a relatively large number of postal students ("distance-learners") at Ruskin College before 1914 as well as a smaller number of residential students (Lewis 1993). The Great war led to a surge of demand for new classes, partly to explore what was happening and partly as a symptom of local unrest and resistance to the war. The ensuing coal strike coincided with the growth of the Plebs League and the Central Labour College which was utterly dependent on the support of the miners of South Wales (Lewis 1993). The demand for classes continued to grow after 1918, particularly in and around Swansea (Lewis 1993),

pushed perhaps by the events in the Soviet Union and pulled by the onset of the depression.

The WEA shared control of education in liberal subjects with university tutorial classes, the YMCA and the National Council of Music (Welsh Department 1937). By 1918 the success of the university extra-mural classes was so great that according to one observer they could have been extended "*without limit*" (Ellis 1935). A residential adult education college was founded at Harlech in 1927, taking over students after the closure of the Central Labour College (Lewis 1993). The college had an inherited tradition of collectivist education, with ex-students returning as a desirable influence on their local community. For some this influence meant a cascading of radical socialism, for others it meant socialisation into a liberal democracy (the tensions between these views and their implications for a learning society today are discussed further in Gorard et al. 1997b). The *Coleg* Harlech was also over-subscribed, and despite the fact that some men left their jobs after the courses in order to study for further courses of training, it was those who returned to their normal station from the residential college after a "*glimpse of the vision splendid*" (Ellis 1935 p. 201) who were most influential in sustaining a demand for more learning. By 1920 WEA classes and local debating societies in Neath were well-attended and there was said to be a "*deep hunger for learning amongst the people*" there (Eaton 1987, p.153). There were also weekly classes for the miners paid for by the education authority and well-attended lectures in the library.

This period encompasses a spate of growth in the number of Workers Institutes in South Wales, such as the Victoria Institute and library started in Port Talbot in 1887 (Jones 1991). These were often paid for by a penny in the pound taken from miners wages and matched by the coal mine owners, or by philanthropists. After 1919, the Miners Welfare Fund paid a penny for every ton of coal raised in Britain, and this money was used to help improve or increase the local 'Stutes (Nash et al. 1995). For example, the Oakdale Workmen's Institute and Library was founded in 1917, financed by a loan from the Tredegar Iron and Coal Company and repaid by miners over decades. This included a Library, reading room, committee room and concert hall. It was used for concerts, Eisteddfodau, political meetings, lectures, and clubs and societies as well as entertainment (Nash et al. 1995). Evening classes at the Institutes and halls included reading (Evans

1971). By 1926, during the latter stages of a second coal dispute, over 2,000 students, mostly miners, were attending 65 Independent Working Class Education classes in South Wales, while a further 500 or more were in 31 WEA classes, growing to over 1,000 by 1929 (Lewis 1993), of whom over 80% were manual workers.

Unemployment during the depression of 1929-35 was at its worst in South Wales, and although a quarter of a million people left to go to England in search of work, there were entire villages of men on the dole. Nevertheless, South Wales had at least 135 workers Institutes which were well-attended, despite or perhaps because of the depression. For example, 250 people attended a meeting on geology at Oakdale in 1928 (Nash et al. 1995), and drama groups at the YMCA and Victoria Institute thrived, eventually producing actors of world-wide repute such as Richard Burton and Anthony Hopkins (Jones 1991). The peak use of the libraries came in 1926, with a record of 49,161 annual loans in one small community and new branch libraries such as that at Aberafan opening in 1936. The issue of non-fiction in particular grew during the depression (Eaton 1987). Even here adult education may be seen by some as an attempt at constraint, for although workers were no longer seen as a revolutionary threat, the enforced leisure of unemployment made them seem a social menace to some (Lewis 1993).

By 1935/36 there were 517 separate adult courses in Wales of at least one years duration and these were in addition to those in what were termed recognised places of learning. They might be considered the equivalent of uncertificated courses today, being partly invisible and the forgotten sector of education. They catered for 10,246 students and the majority were in South Wales and run by the WEA (224 classes). The supply of classes was still not equal to the demand (Welsh Department 1937). Most were training lectures, attracting students over 25 years of age, most frequently from mining and quarrying occupations (Welsh Department 1937). The growth in demand for day and weekend courses in addition to the more normal evening fare also led to the establishment of 20 Labour Colleges in South Wales by 1937, catering for 2,243 students. By 1938 there were 31 such adult day schools taking 5,716 students for classes in current political issues such as the rise of fascism, so that many local men and women were both well-read and well-informed during the inter-war years (Lewis 1993).

6. A POST-WAR LEARNING SOCIETY?

By 1950, the Miner's Institute in Tredegar had a library of over 23,000 books, and an elaborate programme of evening classes and the position was similar across all of the coalfield valleys (Francis 1976). By this time, institute members worked mainly in nationalised industries such as coal, steel and rail in which both initial and continuing training were provided for all. These organisations had an internal labour market leading to supervisory and managerial posts (Istance and Rees 1995). In Britain as a whole, the number of university students grew from 52,000 in 1946 to 185,000 in 1966, students on other full-time and sandwich courses grew from 54,000 to 273,000, while it has been estimated that around 40% of all manual workers were voluntary participants in WEA classes (Kelly 1992) which continued after 1944 as a supplier of liberal non-vocational courses but with a declining wider role (Lewis 1993). The purpose of workers education was not solely to allow an individual to rise above their class background, although social mobility after 1945 was substantial, with several children of South Wales workers taking high office in successive Labour Governments for example. Another purpose of workers education was to raise the educational level of the whole community (Rees 1996). In this way, the post-1945 educational settlement included the changes in socialisation springing from the nationalisation of the major industries in the region, the formal training opportunities that ensued and the rapid increase in Higher and Further Education as well as the more obvious reforms of the Education Act 1944. This period, in which the University of Wales had an intake of which 40% were from working-class backgrounds (Jones 1982) represents a time when many adults had greater opportunities in Wales than may have been available to their peers in England.

It should be noted by planners of any future learning society that these post-war educational opportunities took place in a period that has been described in retrospect as economically "affluent" (Kelly 1992) as a result of economic reorientation by all parties and intelligent political strategies by all parties (McIlroy 1990), and this increase in affluence is more likely to be a cause of the apparent upturn in learning than the other way around (see section on causal modelling in Gorard et al. 1997). There was near full employment (less than 1%, McIlroy 1990), high job security, a rise in real income for many people (2% above inflation p.a., McIlroy 1990) and so a better bargaining position for

labour. There was redistributive taxation in favour of lower income groups and beneath all of this the welfare state, an edifice completed by the great series of enactments 1944-46. Perhaps for the first time plumbers mates drove to work in their own cars, while dentists decorated their own houses (Kelly 1992). A tendency for people to marry earlier, and have fewer and earlier children bought more leisure in middle-age, a leisure assisted by a host of new labour-saving devices in the home. The population was ageing and an increasing proportion of workers had clerical and administrative jobs with shorter hours. The growth in both public and private transport created mobility. More people lived in their own homes as "nuclear" families and started homely interests such as gardening and there was an upsurge of interest in music and other arts (Kelly 1992). Publishers like Penguin popularised the paperback book from 1935, so books became cheaper, libraries became better stocked and reading as a pastime increased dramatically despite the concurrent growth in television output. Television and radio were also a powerful educational force, realised most formally by the creation of the University of the Air (later the Open University) by the 1960s (Kelly 1992).

In South Wales therefore, some of the characteristics of a learning society may already have been in place in the earlier twentieth century - e.g. access to education lifelong, limited control of one's own education, learning for cultural and developmental reasons rather than exclusively economic ones, and changes in the forms of knowledge available to the working class in addition to the more frequently cited social mobility of individuals. The tradition of adult education among working-class men was strong. They received initial education, plus job-related training in relatively stable occupations, and wider educational and developmental opportunities via the Institutes and workers Halls. These programmes were enriching and practical, with a cultural as well as a career progress emphasis (Istance and Rees 1995). The socialisation and training that such men received through work may have been as important to them as staying on at school has been for later generations. In 1944 the nationalisation of the three major local industries - steel, coal and rail - was part of the same package as the Education Act, with which it has a neat congruence. The socialisation in the colliery or steelworks was as much part of the educational climate in the post-war settlement as the free schooling of children. Despite the continuing inequalities within society, independent working-class education moved some way from a

Marxist oppositional stance towards one of reforming the capitalist system from within (McIlroy 1990).

Such provision of, and interest in, adult education in Wales will surely have provided some compensation for earlier poor initial educational experiences. However, this situation must not be idealised. On the one hand it is possible to exaggerate the need for compensatory education at this stage, since many workers being in-migrants to the region during a boom time for South Wales were educated elsewhere, and some reports anyway suggest that a reasonable standard of less formal education was available to many even before state compulsion (Johnson 1979, West 1994, Tooley 1996). In fact, it has been claimed that proportionately twice as many children went to school in Wales in the 1930s as they did in England (Rees 1996). Also, as with initial education at the same time, it could also be that the adult educational system has been a weakening factor in Welsh society, raising false hopes of better employment, leading eventually to emigration from the principality perhaps as a form of "brain drain". For example, the chief limitation on the expansion of adult extra-mural classes in 1918 was the lack of qualified tutors, most of whom worked on a voluntary basis. According to one report, the best teachers went to England after their training to get a better job (Ellis 1935). Those remaining tended to be both uncertified and parochial in their viewpoint, with no knowledge of areas beyond their own district. Similarly during the chronic unemployment 1929-35, the migration of tutors to England led to the collapse of many adult classes despite the concurrent rise in local demand (Lewis 1993). When times are hard it tends to be the better-educated residents who leave Wales and neither now nor in the past has there been a clear policy to replace them or tempt them back.

Also, this "golden age" of voluntary adult learning was heavily gendered and of limited geographical application. Training in Wales has traditionally only been provided for men and has been much more prevalent in the industrial south than elsewhere in Wales (Istance and Rees 1995). Since mining, especially of coal has dominated the economy of South Wales in the first half of this century, gradually replacing agriculture, and since women have not traditionally been employed in mining or its linked industries of metal and transport, local opportunities for women have been limited. The training of women was an area of "gross neglect" in South Wales with only three women of the 200 or so students in WEA classes

of 1911-12 (Lewis 1993). Most women were employed in agriculture and domestic service (Williams 1983). As these areas of employment declined after 1914 so did local job opportunities for women and their related training programmes. Educational development for women in South Wales was constrained by current perceptions of family, the law, medical opposition, prejudice and inherent conservatism (Evans 1990a). Women's groups did use the facilities of the men's institutes but were never allowed to be part of the organisation, while the attendance of children was heavily discouraged (Nash et al. 1995). However this gendering of learning opportunities should not be over-emphasised. Much learning is informal anyway and therefore unrecorded. In some cases the relevant statistics for Wales are not available for a variety of administrative reasons (Gorard 1997). In others the participation of women has simply been rendered invisible in accounts written by men (Spender 1989). Nevertheless, according to some observers women have always predominated in formal post-war adult education (Kelly 1992). This is true not just of the LEA-provided evening institutes whose intakes were over 70% women from 1946 to 1966, but also the classes of the responsible bodies such as WEA and university extra-mural provision (a rise from 55% women students in 1946 to nearly 70% by 1966). There was in addition a huge rise in the post-war popularity of Women's Institutes and Townswomen's Guilds whose members numbered three quarters of a million in the 1960s (Kelly 1992).

A final problem for this notion of an early Welsh learning society is that although built on many of the traditions acknowledged above, in some respects it was not specifically Welsh. It was Welsh because it took place in Wales, but it generally did not take place in the Welsh language and many of the participants were recent in-migrants. The huge expansion of the South Wales coalfield with its immigration and industrial development disrupted and diluted the Welshness of the language and the culture of the chapel (Lewis 1993). It explains why 20% of the total area of Wales contained 70% of the population (Gorard 1997), as most people gained their livelihood from coal, sometimes indirectly through transport or metal production. Between 1901 and 1911 73% of the mining workforce came from outside Wales. By 1911 25% of all adults in Glamorgan were non-Welsh. Secularisation coincided with this cross-culturalisation as attendance at chapel dropped, the mine owners replaced the Anglican clergy as common class enemies, and candidates who had been destined for the chapel clergy, such as Arthur

Horner, became local political officials instead. The gospel of socialism almost entirely replaced the gospel of non-conformity (Lewis 1993). According to this account, some Welsh nationalists, threatened by the growth of internationalism began to fear at this time that class loyalty might turn out to be thicker than the "blood" of the Welsh, and in a unique period of growing international awareness and an awakening interest in remedying serious social and economic inequalities, only seemed interested in the prospective loss of the language, to the bafflement of the educators in the WEA.

7. PERFORMANCE MEASURES FOR ADULT EDUCATION

Today, the nature of lifelong learning in South Wales is different without being clearly better. The industry infrastructure has changed and the training provision with it. The number of books issued by libraries in the UK is in decline despite a growing population. In Neath the number of books issued each year dropped by 11% from 1974 to 1986 (Eaton 1987). The last workers institute in Wales was built in 1961, and all of them gradually switched to being primarily places of entertainment rather than learning. Oakdale was closed in 1987 and is now a museum (Nash et al. 1995), perhaps a symbolic memorial to the passing of one form of a learning society. All adult education in Wales has declined since the early 1980s and adult education provided by LEAs has shown an enormous drop since 1991, so that more recent generations may not have the opportunities that their fathers did (Rees and Rees 1980). It is unlikely that this drop is simply due to lack of demand but is also a result of the lack of centres and courses on offer. Reducing the number of centres may make sense financially but it increases the average travel time for students in an area of limited public transport. The massive impact, particularly on female students, can be seen in Figure 2. Of course, LEAs are not the only providers of adult education and training. The WEA and YMCA also provide classes for adults, but the numbers of these are still diminishing, now approximately 15,000 and 1,500 respectively (Welsh Office 1995d). The growth area is in university department extra-mural classes which now offer 2,105 classes taking 33,362 students in 1993/94, of which the Welsh Office funded 29,916. During this same period, the number of people in training through work has shown no rise in Wales. Of 940,000 employees, only 14,000 had any training in the four weeks prior to one survey, of which 8,000 had training off-the-job, 4,000 on-the-job and 2,000 had both (Welsh Office 1995d). These proportions have been constant for the last four years. Now, 25%

of companies have a written training plan, which is a rise from 16% in 1991, and the figures for companies with an agreed annual training budget are broadly similar (Welsh Office 1996). However, plans and budgets are easy to increase. They are window-dressing, indicative of but not the same as training.

Vocational training in Wales, as in the rest of Britain, is largely deregulated and left to employers who tend to focus on a relatively low skills equilibrium, compared to Germany, for instance. Qualifications such as NVQs are generally used to motivate and certify training that employers were already giving anyway. Very few small/medium sized companies in South Wales offer conscious multiskilling since they are dominated by the fear of poaching (Cockrill et al. 1996). Istance and Rees (1994) reported that the percentage of the working-age population who had receiving job-related training in 1992 was lower in Wales than any GB region. Wales consistently has the lowest proportion of 19-21 year olds qualified at NVQ level 2, 56% in 1995 compared to 64% for the UK as a whole and 70% for Scotland (DfEe 1995). Similarly for NVQ level 3 and higher, 34% Wales, 38% UK, 46% Scotland and also for NVQ level 4. In terms of the National targets for education and training, Wales had the lowest attainment of the Foundation Target 1 among the home countries by 1993, partly because of the relatively poor performance of males (Istance and Rees 1995). A similar picture applies to Foundation Target 3, except that in this case, women are also performing poorly in Wales. The figures are improving (Jones 1996), but not as fast as in England (DfEe 1996$_c$) and not as fast as needed to meet the targets, and this is despite primary evidence from this study that some employers are "sharp-pencilling" NVQ certificates in order to meet their own targets. Much of the improvement also comes from natural inflation of qualifications as older people retire, rather than being due to an increase in investment in training for all ages. Wales also has a low proportion of trainees gaining a qualification after Youth Training (39% compared to 47% nationally, DfEe 1996$_c$). Of those of working age in Wales, 27% have no qualification at all, 19% have a GCSE, 24% have an A level, 9% have a higher qualification below degree and a further 9% have a degree or equivalent (Welsh Office 1996). The number of people with no qualifications is higher in the older age groups, 43% of 60 to 64 year olds, 26% of 35-49 and 14% of 20-24 for example (Welsh Office 1995$_e$).

However, the proportion of employees in Wales who had received any job-related training in the previous four weeks was higher than the national average, 13.9% versus 13.4% (DfEe 1995). Given that the figures for qualifications look very different, this finding clarifies the crucial distinction between participation in training and certification. On the other hand, in 1992 75% of Welsh working respondents had no training in past 12 months (Istance and Rees 1995) and in many cases the training available may be getting shorter. A growth in half-day health and safety or word-processing courses for example could lead to the appearance of more regular training for many people. Even where lengthier training takes place, simple increases in numbers cannot disguise the fact that opportunities vary significantly by gender and class. Perhaps because of the current rigid gender segregation in the workforce of South Wales, women receive far less employer-funded training (Istance and Rees 1995). Women more often take evening, open and distance learning course, while men still monopolise the sandwich and FE block and day release places. In 1994, whereas around 20 to 35% of men aged 16-64 were doing or completed a recognised trade apprenticeship, only 7% of women were in the same position (Welsh Office 1995$_e$). Women are, of course, making relative progress in terms of academic qualifications, but even here the progress is more marked precisely because so many men in Wales are doing so poorly in terms of certification. Participation in education or training, apart from leisure classes, also declines with age, 63% of 16-19 year olds, 22% of 20-24, 10% of 25-34, 8% of 35-49, and only 2% of those who are 50+. The trend for women is the same as the overall trend except that the increase in participation and qualification for the younger age groups is more marked than for men (Welsh Office 1995$_e$).

With women as a relatively untapped supply of labour in South Wales and a rapid decline of staple industries, workers are in abundant supply locally. In addition, much of the work that they are offered is so routine that they require little training and so they gain little of transferable or developmental value (Rees 1996). Even where demand exceeds supply, as it does for some craft and management jobs, training is almost non-existent and such jobs are often taken by in-migrants to the region or recruits are taken on favourable terms from other companies. In one small recent study a clear majority of employers in South Wales mentioned difficulties in recruiting skilled workers for some positions (Cockrill et al. 1996). However, these reports must be viewed with some

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scepticism, since the skills mentioned were most often basic literacy and numeracy and there is an indication that these are not a necessary component of job performance in many cases, merely a necessity for further study via day release courses (Spielhofer 1996). In addition, lack of suitable applicants can be as much as reflection of the pay and conditions advertised by the employer as lack of skill in the prospective workforce. While it is evident that highly educated people have left the region in search of jobs, there remain a core of people who will not move and for whom South Wales is a permanent home. In general terms they may be less well-trained, although they will not be restricted to the skills of one occupation since they must be prepared to take any reasonable local job (Cockrill et al. 1996). Despite the recent increases in participation in HE and FE in Wales (see Figure 3), there is still a danger of Wales becoming a relatively low pay, low skill economy. In the first place there are insufficient opportunities locally for the number of graduates produced locally, so the exodus or waste of the highly educated continues (Delamont and Rees 1996). Many students from Wales, around 8,000, attend universities outside Wales and a fair proportion of these may never return. In addition, the majority of students at the University of Wales, 17,000 in all, are from outside Wales, although this situation is changing with a shift towards study nearer home, the expansion of FE in Wales and the shift towards older less "traditional" students via Access courses and less traditional HE institutions, such as the Open University (Istance and Rees 1995).

The Welsh Office (1995c) is now trying to increase and improve local training in order to stimulate growth of the Welsh regional economy, as well as to fulfil individual potential, develop local talent, and outperform competitor economies. With other agencies they form a part of what has been described as Team Wales (Wales "2000" 1996). The Welsh Office provides finance, the Welsh Development Agency (and the Development Board for Rural Wales) provides backup in the form of economic regeneration and attracting investment, and the Training and Enterprise Councils stimulate and define local skills needs, provide the skills training and monitor equal opportunities. However, such agencies play a very minor role in many local employers training provision, with the Training and Enterprise Councils, for example, seen merely as a way of getting funds (Cockrill et al. 1996). Wales is described by the Welsh Office as a region with high speed road and rail links to European markets, a workforce of high quality which is well suited to the demands of modern technology as evidenced by

continuing overseas investment. The Welsh Office has plans in the form of action for lifelong learning to help prospective learners with costs, including childcare and travel, and with increased flexibility of provision. Their aim is to assist all adult to reach a minimum standard of education necessary for further study. They also suggest that training should be available to all in both Welsh and English and that every adult should be able to learn Welsh for their jobs, and it must be noted that as with the programme for Welsh in initial education this is likely to be a source of considerable weakness in training at least for the immediate future.

CONCLUSION

The major purpose of this paper is to paint a backdrop of the learning opportunities available to the respondents in the survey component of this study who have provided retrospective learning histories (going back to 1931 in one instance). These data will be combined with the secondary data on the study regions (Gorard 1997), new material from interviews with local training providers with long memories, and oral accounts from the South Wales Miner's Archive. It is only in the light of the opportunities available at the time that it is possible to examine the decisions of individuals to participate in adult education and training or not. One further purpose of this paper is to provide some evidence relevant to the nature of a learning society (see forthcoming paper), showing that progress towards such an objective may be described as mixed, non-linear and even retrospective in some respects. However, on a more practical level, this paper also provides a part of the picture needed by policy-makers and planners to ensure a better educational future for the region. Above all, Wales must not become seen simply as a supplier of relatively low-cost semi-skilled flexible labour, which is certainly one possible future for the region (Istance and Rees (1995). Fitting people to new or existing jobs by reactive re-training is one thing. Genuine education in its pseudo-paradoxical sense of teaching independence from the instructor is another. The latter is not certain to produce the economic regeneration for Wales that some seek, but it would almost certainly produce dramatic social and political changes that may well be preferable in retrospect.

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APPENDIX A - Educational participation and outcomes

Figure 1 - Percentage of pupils in Wales gaining benchmark figures (Welsh Office 1995c)

	1991	1994
5+ GCSE grade C	52	60
2 A level equivalents	24	36

Figure 2 - LEA based adult education in Wales (Welsh Office 1995d)

	1991/92	1993/94
LEA centres	341	197
Male students	19,672	13,227
Female students	50,035	37,698

Figure 3 - FE and HE students at institutions in Wales (Welsh Office 1995f)

	F.E.	H.E.
Full-time/Sandwich	35,457	58,745
Part-time day	24,165	17,264
Evening	33,229	1,779
Total	92,851	77,788

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APPENDIX B - Mid Glamorgan/Ogwr/Bryntirion, Destination of school leavers 1987-1996
(Source: Mid Glamorgan Careers Ltd)

Figure 4 - Mid Glamorgan, destination of school leavers

	Year 11	RTS%	FE%	YTT%	YTE%	Job%	Unempl%
1987	8636						
1988	8272						
1989	7536						
1990	7085	37	12	17	4	13	4
1991	6808	42	17	14	2	9	7
1992	6283						
1993	5992						
1994	6068	48	18	10	2	9	4
1995	6798	46	19	9	1	9	5
1996	7425						
1997	7201						

Figure 5 - Ogwr/Bridgend district, destination of school leavers

	Year 11	RTS%	FE%	YTT%	YTE%	Job%	Unempl%
1987	2113						
1988	2106						
1989	1872						
1990	1779	37	11	12	8	15	4
1991	1666	44	14	13	3	10	6
1992	1549						
1993	1498						
1994	1439	47	16	10	3	9	5
1995	1543	43	17	9	1	12	6
1996	1707						
1997	1678						

Figure 6 - Bryntirion Comprehensive School, Bridgend, destination of school leavers

	Year 11	RTS%	FE%	YTT%	YTE%	Job%	Unempl%
1987							
1988	173	36	12	25	YTS total	18	2
1989							
1990							
1991	177	54	10	12	1	11	5
1992							
1993							
1994	137	59	13	6	2	8	6
1995	150	47	21	13	1	10	3
1996							

1988 - of 62 leavers aged 18+, 48 went on to FE and 14 to employment

Roughly two thirds of those returning to school in Mid Glamorgan are taking A level courses, mostly in the same school as before.

A majority of leavers in 1991 (21% of boys and 36% of girls) who got a job were in the manufacturing sector. This sector is followed by construction (16%), HM forces (10%) and sales (10%) as the most frequent for boys, while for girls the choices were hairdressing (16%) and office secretarial (13%). In Ogwr/Bridgend alone engineering was more popular for boys than the armed forces, while sales were more popular for girls than both secretarial and hairdressing. Most students leaving Bryntirion went into sales.

Of those in employed status YT, construction (52%) and engineering (29%) were most frequent for males, hairdressing (32%), textiles (32%) and manufacturing (24%) for females. But in Ogwr/Bridgend, manufacturing was more frequent for both boys and girls. The corresponding figures for trainee status YT were: construction 32%, manufacturing 18%, and engineering 15% for boys, office/secretarial 41%, and sales 23% for girls. In Ogwr/Bridgend motor vehicles were more frequent than engineering for boys.

Of those entering FE most boys went into engineering (24%), then business/secretarial (12%), and girls health/caring (31%) and business/secretarial (30%). In Ogwr/Bridgend catering is the second favourite for males after engineering, and catering is the third favourite for females.

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